



MASSACHUSETTS
ANIMAL FUND



ACO CORE COMPETENCIES
updated 2022

RECORDS & REPORT WRITING

1








Records

THE LAW

2

Chapter 140, Section 151A(b)



Each animal control officer shall make, keep, and maintain a system of records or forms which fully and correctly disclose the following information concerning each animal in the officer's custody:

- 1) the date and location of apprehension;
- 2) a description of the animal;
- 3) the place of detainment;
- 4) if tagged, the name and address of the owner of the animal;
- 5) the name and address of a new owner, if any, including the date of sale or transfer of the animal;
- 6) if the animal is euthanized, the method and date of such euthanization and the name of the person who euthanized the animal;
- 7) the date, location, and description of an animal euthanized by gunshot in cases of emergency, the disposition of the animal remains, and a description of the situation requiring gunshot.

3

Chapter 140, Section 151A(b)

ACO

Records and Filing

REMINDER

Don't Forget!

ANIMAL INTAKE REPORTS NEED TO BE SENT TO YOUR TOWN CLERK EVERY 30 DAYS (MDAR is checking!)

Each animal control officer shall forward a copy of the record to the town or city clerk within **30 days**.

Copies of the records shall be kept for **2 years** in the office of the city or town clerk wherein such animal control officer is employed."

4

Chapter 140, Section 152

Animal control officers are responsible for providing quarterly reports to the mayor or board of selectmen

- Using copies of the monthly reports submitted to the town or city clerk will satisfy this requirement, but a summary of these activities will provide a clearer picture of the work completed

5

Additional Records

In addition to these required records, ACOs should keep:

A log of daily activities	Kennel inspection reports	Animal bite reports
Financial records	Investigation reports (especially those conducted with the police)	A record of warnings and citations

6

Daily Activity Log

ACOs should maintain a log of daily activities

- This will allow you to keep track of the work you do and tally the information needed for your quarterly reports

In general, include:

- Miles traveled
- Hours worked
- Where you went
- What you did

7

Monthly Activity Report

This allows you to tally the number of calls to which you responded and the number of dogs and cats impounded, returned to owner, adopted, and euthanized, as well as citations issued, in accordance with Chapter 140, Section 152 m1

Send a copy of your monthly activity report to the town or city clerk along with your animal intake reports each month

8

- Financial records contain information on:
 - Income
 - Budgets
 - Expenses
- Keep records of where equipment and supplies were purchased
- Record any money taken in for the cost of care and custody of animals under Chapter 140, Section 151A



Financial Records

9

Slide 8

m1 Added "as well as citations issued"
mcahill, 8/27/2018

Animal Intake Reports

- In accordance with Chapter 140, Section 151A, you must maintain a record of **each animal** that comes into your possession, including those that may be deceased
- MDAR has created an Animal Intake Report
 - This or a similar form may be used to comply with the law
 - A separate form must be completed for every animal you take in, regardless of outcome

10

What animals need a completed intake form?



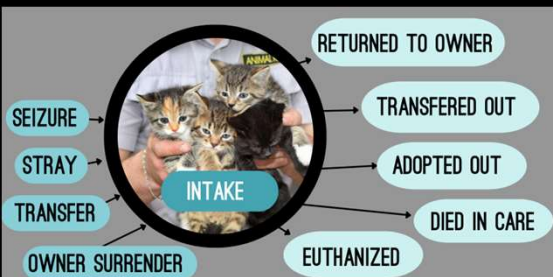
All domestic animals taken in

All wildlife in ACO possession (even if just for transfer)

All deceased domestic animals picked up

Deceased wildlife (a log is sufficient)

11



Intake form is not complete until it states a clear "in" and "out"

12

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER ANIMAL INTAKE FORM

You can find a downloadable copy of the MDAR Animal Intake Form on the Mass Animal Fund website under the FOR ACOs Tab.

This form meets the reporting requirements under MGL Chapter 140 section 151A *if filled out completely.

This or a similar form may be used to comply with the law.
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/aco-resources>

Intake Report Part 1

- In Part 1 of the form you will write a description of the animal (including microchip or tag information if available)
- Cite where the dog or cat was caught
- Note where the animal was held
- One form per animal

Animal Control Officers shall report on this form prior to receiving compensation	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> City or Town of: _____ Date: _____ Animal Type: Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ </div> </div>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I, To City or Town Treasurer, I report that I have caught, confined and disposed of an animal as set forth below:

Breed type (Specify) _____ Approx Age: _____ Sex: _____

Description _____ Date and Time caught: _____

Where Caught: _____ Tattoo/Microchip: _____ Tag#: _____

Scanner brand: _____ I confined this animal at: _____ for a period of _____

Animal Identification



- It is important to be able to identify a dog or cat using correct terminology for inclusion in incident and intake reports
- It is equally important to be able to identify a dog or cat using terms the public will understand in order to expedite the reunion of a dog or cat with its owner

16

Reports vs. Social Media



Description in a report:

- Intact young male Jack Russell Terrier-type dog with tricolor (white/brown/black) short, sleek coat, button ears, straight tail, and brown eyes. White body with brown markings covering face (excluding forehead) and ears and two spots on back and base of tail; black markings on base of tail. Stands 10" tall and weighs 15 lbs. Found without collar or identification; no microchip.

Description on social media:

- Small Jack Russell Terrier-type puppy with tricolor fur.
- (Leave at least one identifier out of description to confirm ownership)

17

Identifying Canines

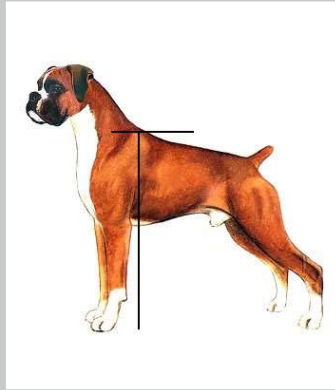
- State the breed name or the breed the dog looks most like, followed by "type"
 - Terrier-type dog
 - German Shepherd-type dog
- Breed name should not be used as the predominant identifier
 - Many lost reports get filed with just breed names, but the breed is determined incorrectly at least 70% of the time
 - The physical description and identifying features can make all the difference in getting the animal reclaimed



18

Size

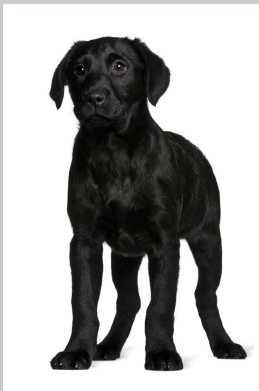
- In general, use descriptors such as small, medium, large, or extra large when referring to size
- If a case requires more specific measurements, you can weigh the dog and measure height from the ground to the top of the animal's shoulders



19

Common Coats Colors for Dogs

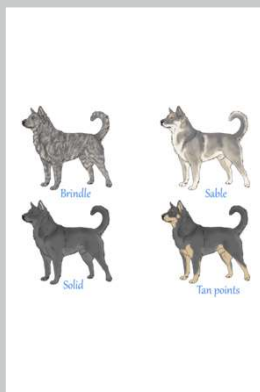
- Black
- Chocolate
- Cream (off-white)
- Fawn (light gray-brown)
- Gray
- Liver (deep red-brown)
- Wheat (pale yellow)
- White
- Yellow



20

Markings

- Markings are the way different colors are arranged on a dog
- It is helpful to describe colors different from the body on the head or face, feet, tip of tail, and belly of the dog



21

Coat Length & Texture



Wiry dog

- Length:
 - Very short
 - Short
 - Medium
 - Long
- Texture:
 - Sleek
 - Soft
 - Hard
 - Straight
 - Smooth
 - Wavy
 - Wooly
 - Silky
 - Curly
 - Wiry

22



Age

- If you can estimate it accurately, use age in the description
- You can use generic terms such as puppy, adolescent, adult, and senior

23

Ears



prick



rose



semi



drop



button



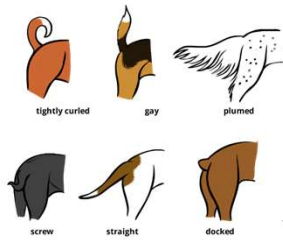
bat



cropped

24

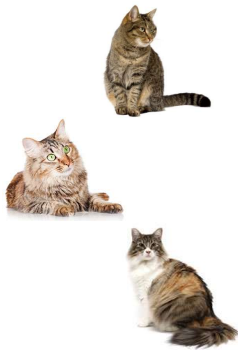
Tails



25

Identifying Felines

- Domestic Shorthair (DSH)
 - Young kittens that are DSH may have coats that spike like porcupine quills
- Domestic Medium Hair (DMH)
 - Long hair on the stomach
 - A bit of a ruff (long hair at the neck/chest area)
- Domestic Long Hair (DLH)
 - Has a coat that flows and hangs down its sides



26

Coat Color

- Black
- Blue (officially used to describe gray cats; can vary from light to dark)
- Brown (warm, deep brown, like a chestnut or coffee grounds)
- Cream (a soft, blonde color)
- Red (the same color and shades as people with red hair—often referred to as "orange")
- White (no shades of color are on the animal)

27



Coat Pattern

- Calico
 - White coat with patches of black and red
 - Almost always female cats

28



Coat Pattern

- Tortoiseshell
 - Black coat with patches of red and cream
 - Almost always female cats

29

Coat Pattern

- Colorpoint
 - Light-colored cats with darker markings only on the ears, face, legs, and tail
 - Ex: Siamese, Himalayan, and Birman breeds
 - List the color of the cat by putting the color of the markings in front of the word “point”
 - Blue Point (gray)
 - Chocolate Point (brown)
 - Flame Point (red)
 - Lilac Point (dark silver)
 - Seal Point (dark brown)
 - Colorpoint with tabby markings on the points is called a lynx point with the color listed in front of the word “lynx”



30



Coat Pattern

- Tabby
 - A coat pattern, not a color
 - All tabbies have stripes on their tails, legs, throats, and faces
 - All have an “M” pattern on the forehead

31

Coat Pattern

- Tabby Colors
 - State the color first and then the word “tabby”
 - Blue: Dark blue stripes on a lighter blue background
 - Brown: Black or very dark brown stripes on a lighter brown background
 - Cream: Darker cream stripes on a lighter cream background
 - Red: Darker red stripes on a lighter red background
 - Silver: Black stripes on a silver background



32



Eye Color

- Eye color may sometimes be the only way to tell two cats apart
- Colors include:
 - Blue
 - Green
 - Yellow
 - Copper
 - Hazel

33

Age

- If you can estimate it accurately, use age in the description
- You can use generic terms such as kitten, adolescent, adult, and senior



34

Gender Identification

Males

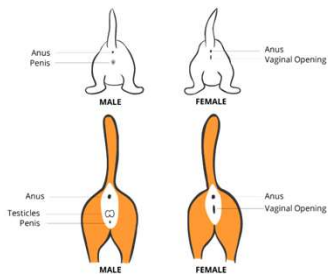
- Penile opening has a circular shape
- Greater distance below the anus than the vaginal opening on a female
- Often difficult to see or feel the testicles in a young male kitten

Females

- Vaginal opening will be a vertical slit
- Vaginal opening is located a very short distance below the anus

35

Gender Identification



36

Identification of a TNRed Cat

- Eartipping is the universal sign of a spayed or neutered feral cat
- This involves removing at least 3/8" off the tip of the cat's ear in a straight line cut
 - Some clinics use the notching technique for marking, but this is less common in New England



37

Intake Report Part 2

- This is used if the animal was returned to its owner and to record attempt to contact.
- Fees given to holding facility should be recorded here.

2. Returned to owner:	
Owner contacted on: _____	Contact Method: _____
Redeemed by owner on: _____	Owner Name: _____
Owner Phone Number: _____	Owner Address: _____
Owner exhibited LICENSE NUMBER: _____ in the city or town of: _____	
Owner paid \$ _____ to _____ for care and custody @ \$ _____ per day for _____ days.	

38

Intake Report Part 3

- Part 3 is used if the animal was adopted/transferred after a seven-day hold
 - Transfers to registered shelters and rescues can only occur after the seven-day hold

3. Animal was adopted/transferred to:	
Name: _____	Address: _____ Phone: _____
Purchaser secured a LICENSE NUMBER _____ in the city or town of: _____	
On _____ and he/she paid an adoption fee of \$ _____ paid to _____	

39

Intake Report Part 4

- Write when the animal was given a rabies vaccine
 - All dogs and cats over the age of 6 months must be rabies vaccinated (Chapter 140, Section 145B)

4. Rabies vaccination information: (Attach copy of rabies certificate to this form)	
Rabies vaccination given by:	Name of Veterinarian
On _____ Date	Rabies vaccination expires on : _____ Date

40

Intake Report Part 5

- Part 5 must be filled out if the animal was euthanized, whether after a seven-day hold for dogs or in the field in an emergency situation
- Should also be used if animal died in care. Report should be attached.

4. Euthanasia/died in care:	
Date animal destroyed _____ Date _____	using _____ Method of Euthanasia _____
By: _____ Name and location of veterinarian _____	Animal died in care on _____ Report attached _____

41

Intake Report Part 6

- This indicates what payment, if any, was received for care and custody of the animal as allowed in Chapter 140, Section 151A

6. Payment:	
On account of this animal there is due me for care and custody _____ 7 _____ days @ \$ _____ 20 _____ per day, \$ _____ 140 _____	
Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury _____ Sally Smith _____, Animal Control Officer	
<small>White Copy - Animal Control / Blue Copy - Dog Owner / Pink Copy - City/Town Treasurer / Yellow Copy - City/Town Clerk</small>	

42

Filing

These reports should be kept for your own records and must be compiled and a copy sent to your town or city clerk **every 30 days**

It is good practice to send these reports with a copy of your Daily Activity Logs and Monthly Activity Reports



43

Public Records Requests



Remember: Your supervisor, the town/city clerk, MDAR, and the public may request to see any and all of your records at any time

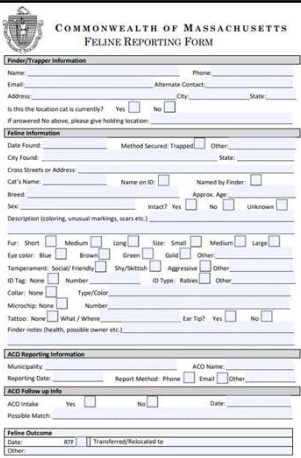
- It is imperative that you have complete, up-to-date records

44

Feline Reporting Form

- For trappers
- For Shelter/Rescue
- For Veterinarians





45



46

Warnings & Citations

- Some cities and towns may preprint warnings and citations with a separate form for each kind of offense
- Be familiar with your local bylaws or ordinances so that you will know when to give warnings and citations
- When you issue a warning or citation, make sure that the citizen understands the violation involved

47

Warnings & Citations

- Certain violations can call specifically for a warning for a first offense

PAWS II (2018) increased fines and removed warnings under Chapter 140 section 173A.

 - If any warnings are issued, they must be made in writing
 - A verbal warning is like not issuing a warning at all, and, in such cases, a second offense would have to be treated as a first offense
- Citations and warnings are legal documents
 - Be careful when you are writing them
 - If you make mistakes, a judge may dismiss them

48

Warnings & Citations



- A warning or citation needs to include:
 - Your name
 - The name, address, phone number, and birth date of the person receiving the warning/citation
 - The type of violation and the date, time, and location at which it occurred

49



REPORTS

50

Incident Reports

Reports should be written for any incident where you are gathering information, responding to a call/complaint, or conducting an investigation.

There are many reasons why you might conduct an investigation

Reasons include:

- An animal bite or other potential rabies exposure situation
- Inhumane treatment of an animal
- A violation of animal control laws

51

Reports

- All reports should be **clear, concise, and well organized**.

The goal of an effective report is to present an accurate and easy to understand account of the incident and information gathered.

Take time to organize the facts.



52

Identifiers Needed

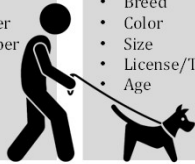
- Make sure your report/supporting forms contain identifiers for all individuals and animals involved:

For People

- Name
- Date of birth
- Phone Number
- License Number
- Address

For Animals

- Name
- Breed
- Color
- Size
- License/Tag numbers
- Age



53



Reports

- Take notes and record facts or events in chronological order.
- Make sure to record accurate information and that all information presented is objective.
- Collect information that answers the following questions: **who, what, when, where, how, and why.**

54

Reports

- **Writing the narrative: be clear**

-Start your report with an opening sentence that clearly states who is writing the report, date/time, what you are responding to, and to where.

"At 5:10 PM on Monday, August 25th, I, Animal Control Officer Kay Jones responded to a found dog call at the Greasy Spoon Diner at 125 Oily Lane, Lowell, MA from Sally Brown (978-611-1111)."

55

- **Writing the narrative: be clear**

– Introduce all individuals interviewed.

"I spoke with the women holding the leash of the blonde, lab-type dog, who identified herself with her Massachusetts Driver License as Sally Simple (dob 1/1/79). I asked Simple to describe how she found the dog"

56



Investigation Reports

- **Writing the narrative: be clear**

– Include observations. Make sure you are stating what you are seeing and not drawing conclusions.

Instead of : The dog appeared very neglected and in pain.

Describe the details: The dog's ribs could clearly be seen, he had a 4 inch wide open wound on top of his front right paw, and was holding up that leg as he walked.

57

Reports



Writing the narrative: be concise

Write in everyday speech.

Be sure to write down your narrative in full detail, but write in simple language avoiding wordiness, jargons, or abbreviations that most people wouldn't know.

Try to limit yourself to one idea per sentence and use paragraphs to break up actions.

58

Reports

- Writing the narrative: be well organized**
 - Present details in chronological order. Use bullets to help present a clear list of information or actions.

Sally Simple stated the following:

- "The dog is left outside all day long on a chain"
- "Joe leaves that dog outside even when there is a blizzard outside"
- "Anytime I walk by the dog its growling and jumping towards me."

59

Reports

Allways chek four speling mistakes



- Wrapping it Up**
 - Proofread!
- If using an auto correct program make sure it is not changing important aspects of the narrative, such as names and places.
- Spell checkers typically don't catch commonly misused words, so having a second person read your report before submission can be helpful

60

FINAL EXAM

Watch the final exam scenario. Use the skills you learned throughout this course and the information collected to write a complete report of the incident from the time ACOs Gualtieri and Ray arrived on scene (Section One) and explain the procedures you would follow to handle this case in its entirety (Sections Two – Six).
